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WHA FOR MICHAEL PUCETTI
G/TIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PARAGUAY: TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS ASSESSMENT REPORT
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11. (U) This is an action request; see para 10.

12. (U) SUMMARY: The USD 155K that post received in FY-2004 has played an important role in helping Paraguay combat its TIP problem, particularly in the areas of prevention and protection. However, post anticipates these funds running out by the end of 2006. Working closely with U.S. experts and GOP officials, we have identified concrete requirements to strengthen Paraguay's ability to combat trafficking in the coming year. As part of a bilateral assistance project between the Embassy of the United States in Asuncion and the Government of Paraguay (GOP), the USG conducted a study of Paraguay's system of immigration and border controls between July 23 through August 5, 2005, with a view to offering recommendations to the GOP that would assist it in combating the problem of trafficking in persons (TIP) by improving border controls. A team of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials led the assessment. The DHS Team included agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Post requests an allocation of USD 310,000 in FY-2006 INL funds consistent with the DHS Team's recommendations and consultation with GOP officials to continue assisting the GOP in combating TIP. End Summary.

The Assessment

13. (U) Paraguay is a source country for trafficked women and children, many of whom are smuggled across Paraguay's borders into the neighboring countries of Brazil and Argentina. Paraguay's Department of Immigration is aware of the TIP problem and acknowledges the GOP must improve its border controls in order to prevent traffickers from transporting victims across its borders.

14. (U) During the assessment, the team spoke with several Ministry and Secretariat officials in Asuncion, including the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Customs, and Interior (Immigration Department), the Secretariats of Women, Repatriations, and Children and Adolescents. They also spoke to the Inter-American Development Bank and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Grupo Luna Nueva, a local recovery center for victims. The team visited several land border inspection stations including Ciudad del Este, Encarnacion, Pedro Juan Caballero and Puerto Falcon. They also inspected the Silvio Pettirossi International Airport in Asuncion.

More Money, Fewer Problems

15. (U) The assessment report has been reviewed by all the stakeholders within AMEmbassy Asuncion and was translated into Spanish and provided to our GOP counterparts. The next phase of this project is to take action on the recommendations made by the Team.

16. (U) In order to build on advances made by the GOP, Post has identified several areas that will assist the GOP better in its efforts to combat TIP. Our focus in the coming year is to expand training for officials, investigators, prosecutors and judges; assist the GOP to expand rehabilitation center services in government run shelters; enhance border controls; and establish and maintain a victim database to provide better services to the victims of TIP and prosecute perpetrators. However, the GOP will require outside funds to meet essential program requirements.

Prevention

7.(U) Prevention represents the weakest link in GOP efforts to combat trafficking. The GOP has taken some positive steps that we have supported - information pamphlets and radio spots along with a hotline -- but funding and prevention programs remain weak. Post recommends continued funding support for the Ministry of Womens Affairs outreach programs to prevent trafficking as well as the following:

-- The DHS team recommends holding an annual border control symposium in Asuncion with the participation of all border control agencies. A symposium will provide the opportunity for agency administrators to clearly communicate the mission of the individual border control agencies, establish a national strategy as well as coordinate a unified border enforcement effort. In addition, this symposium would address the concerns heard by the DHS officers of many border control front line officials regarding a concern relating to a "disconnect" between Asuncion and frontline border crossing offices. Post would fund the first border patrol symposium.

-- The DHS team recommends that a supervisory level U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer be detailed to Paraguay for a 30-60 day period to provide advisory assistance at the various ports of entry to assist Paraguayan officials in implementing administrative and procedural changes. The Team feels that Paraguayan border control officials are capable of performing their duties but lack the proper training and guidance. A short-term advisor could assist in teaching them to conduct interviews, searches, observation techniques, etc.

-- The DHS team recommends that selected Paraguayan officials with direct supervisory responsibilities at Paraguayan ports of entry be given the opportunity to travel to the U.S. and observe first-hand U.S. border management techniques and functions at specific U.S. ports of entry.

Protection

18. (U) The GOP has made some strides in providing support and protection to victims but resources are few. The Ministry of Repatriations seeks corporate funds to repatriate victims because the GOP cannot support adequately the ministries operations. In addition, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has ambitious plans to establish a shelter to provide victims a place to reside while in Asuncion once they are repatriated. Again, the lack of GOP resources has prevented the ministry from establishing a 50 bed facility. At this time, a Catholic monastery is providing beds to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Usually the victims remain in Asuncion for approximately 2 or 3 months while they are receiving legal, medical, psychological and rehabilitative services. Once the women leave Asuncion, there is no follow-up or support program to assist victims in returning to their home town. Last year, post provided funds to assist the Women's Ministry in creating a rehabilitation center that provides trafficked

women with services including psychological and job counseling. Post recommends identifying funds to support the establishment of a more permanent shelter to protect victims and assist them in making the transition to stability as well as efforts to expand GOP support for victims in the interior of the country.